(c) In order to increase the production of oilseeds and pulses two Centrally Sponsored Schemes, namely, Oilseeds Production Programme (OPP) for oilseeds and National Pulses Development Project (NPDP) for pulses are in implementation in various States/UTs in the country. Under these schemes financial assistance is provided on various inputs like production and distribution of deeds, distribution of seeds minikits, distribution of improved farm implements, sprinkler sets, rhyzobium culture, micro nutrients etc. in order to motivate the farmers to take up the cultivation of these crops on large scale.

Farmers conditions

3139. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India has emerged as an agriculture power, but most of the farmers continue to live in pathetic conditions;

(b) whether it is also a fact that though agriculture is the backbone of our economy, much more remains to be done, to improve the lot of farmers;

(c) if so, the steps being taken in this regard;

(d) whether new farm pricing model and reforms in farms sector can improve that lot of farmers to certain extent; and

(e) if so, the steps proposed to be taken in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (c) As per the FAO Production Year Book, 2000, India ranks second after China in foodgrains Production in the World. India's foodgrains production increased from 50.82 million tonnes in 1950-51 to 211.32 million tonnes in 2001 -02. This has enabled India to become a net exporter of foodgrains. As per the 1990-91 agricultural census, there are about 107 million operational holdings (farmers) in India. Of them, nearly 60 per cent are marginal farmers with less than 1 hectare of land, while about 19 per cent are small farmers with 1 to 2 hectares of land. About 13 per cent are in the semi-medium category with 2 to 4 hectares of land while those in the medium category with 4 to 10 hectares of land constitute about 7 per cent

of the total number of farmers in the country. Large farmers with 10 hectares and above constitute hardly 2 per cent of the total number of farmers in the country. The steps taken by the Government to improve the conditions of farmers include special concession/subsidies to small and marginal farmers under various schemes like Integrated Cereal Development Programme for Rice, Wheat % Coarse Cereals, which have since been subsumed under the macro-management scheme so as to give flexibility to States to take up activities as per local requirements.

(d) and (e)The National Agricultural Policy has underscored the need for ensuring remunerative prices for agricultural produce through the announcement of Minimum Support Price (MSPs) for major agricultural commodities. In keeping with this commitment, the Government have been announcing MSPs for kharif and rabi crops. In order to compensate the farmers for the losses suffered in unirrigated areas and the additional expenditure incurred in irrigated areas on account of severe drought this year, the Government also announced a special drought relief price ranging from Rs. 5 to Rs. 20 per quintal for the kharif crops of 2002-03 season.

Oilseds production in Andhra Pradesh

3140. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that despite being a major oilseeds producing State, the production of oilseeds in Andhra Pradesh has decreased considerably, during the last three years;

(b) if so, the details thereof, year-wise;

(c) the main reasons for decrease in the production; and

(d) what incentives are being given and how Government propose to motivate the farmers of Andhra Pradesh, to take up cultivation of oilseeds, in a big way?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) The production of oilseeds in Andhra Pradesh has declined during last three years as compared to the production during 1998-99.The production of oilseeds in Andhra Pradesh during last three years is given as under: